

MICRON ELECTRONICS, INC. INVENTION DISCLOSURE FORM

Exhibit A

97.00999

1. INVENTOR

Hoyt A. Fleming III

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Title of invention:

Method for Handling Unsolicited Emails



2.2 Brief description:

As is well known, the vast majority of Internet users send and receive email. Users enjoy the near instantaneous delivery and the desktop convenience of email. However, just as most people dislike junk mail, most dislike unsolicited, *i.e.*, junk email as well. In fact, a new term, spam, has even been developed for junk email.

Junk email is ever increasing. Companies such as Cyberpromotions send unsolicited emails for a fee that is paid by advertisers. According to recent statistics, AOL accounts currently receive approximately 50 junk emails per day. The large number of junk emails has caused at least one state legislature (Nevada) to propose a law outlawing junk emails.

Prior art methods to eliminate junk emails include the D-Spam initiative. The D-Spam initiative includes a listing service, Cancel-Bot, that companies such as Cyberpromotions (spammers) can use to remove names from email recipient (spammee) lists prior to sending the junk email. The list currently has over 1.4 million addresses registered. However, recently the listing service was discontinued to the significant costs of implementing the service.

While prior art email programs include "inbox assistant" routines that allow one to handle emails that meet a specified criteria, no prior art programs allow one to handle junk emails unless the sender's address is known. However, junk email is sent by numerous senders and it is known that several sender's use address aliases so that the sender's address is not fixed. Thus, a need exists for a simple yet efficient method of handling junk email.

The invention is a software program that handles junk emails. The program considers any unsolicited email to be a junk email.

In one embodiment, the program parses through the SMTP header of a received email and determines the sender's email address. If the sender's email address is not in a "pre-approved" email list, then the program automatically places the junk email in a junk email folder. In this embodiment, when the user has time, he may rapidly scan the senders' address and/or the subject of the emails to determine if the emails are truly junk emails. (It is significantly easier to scan a large number of junk emails when they are not intermingled with solicited emails.) If the emails are truly junk emails, then they may be rapidly deleted. Otherwise, the user may respond to any unsolicited but valuable emails and delete the remainder.

The pre-approved email list may be created automatically. Whenever a user sends an email to a recipient, the recipient's email address can automatically be added to the list. After time, the pre-approved email list would grow to include the vast majority of email addresses that the user would desire to receive emails from. At this time, (and not before) the user may instruct the program to de-spam.

In other embodiments, the pre-approved email list could be manually updated to so that a list of company employees could be added. In still other embodiments, several different lists could be maintained in separate files that correspond to business contacts, personal contacts, and/or customers.

In one embodiment, the pre-approved list could be set and fixed by system administrators so that users would only receive emails from company employees. In this embodiment, the user would not be able to add addresses to the pre-approved list.

In another embodiment, the junk email would be autoforwarded to an assistant who has more time to sort through and disregard the junk email. The assistant would then forward only the valuable emails to the user. (☺This embodiment would be particularly useful for busy business executives such as Joe D. who could autoforward his junk emails to Dean Klein. ☺)

In a final embodiment, the program would automatically delete the email. However, this is a fairly drastic action and may not be suitable for many users.

2.3 *Also attach a complete description, including drawings or sketches and articles relevant to the invention. Legible photocopies of laboratory notebooks are acceptable.*

See above.

3. INFORMATION CONCERNING CONCEPTION OF INVENTION

3.1 CONCEPTION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE INVENTION

a. Identify the date when you first conceived the invention (If not sure, give the earliest date of which you are sure.)

b. To whom was the idea first described and on what date? (Other than a co-inventor.)

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c. Identify the date of the first tangible record such as computer simulation, tape out, drawing or written description. Please specify type and location.

This invention disclosure.

3.2 CONCEPTION OF THE INVENTION

a. Please identify related invention disclosures, patents or other publications describing similar ideas, and other companies working in the same field. Attach copies, if available.

None

b. What is the closest technology, of which you are aware?

Exchange "inbox assistant." However, Exchange requires the user to specify criteria of an email. It is not possible to specify the criteria of a junk email. Thus, Exchange does not handle junk emails.

c. Identify the advantages of this invention over previous technology.

The invention provides a simple yet efficient method of handling junk emails. In addition, some embodiments of the invention allow system administrators to limit emails to pre-approved users such as company employees and customers.

3.3 IMPORTANT DATES

a. Has the invention been disclosed outside the company? No.
If yes, to whom, when, and in what form?

b. Have any articles describing your invention been published? No.
If yes, list author (s), title of article, publication and date.

c. Have any engineering samples been given out? No.
If yes, to whom and on what date?

d. Has any product using the invention been sold or offered for sale? No.
If yes, to whom and on what date?

e. Has any product that has been sold or offered for sale been manufactured or tested using the invention? No.
If yes, to whom and on what date?

3.4 DISPOSITION OF THE INVENTION

a. When will (or did) Micron begin use of the invention experimentally?

The invention is not currently used by Micron. It is not known if it will be used by micron.

b. When will (or did) Micron begin production of or use of this invention?

The invention is not currently used by Micron. It is not known if it will be used by micron.

3.5 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

a. Was the invention developed during a joint development agreement or other contract with an outside company? No.

b. Please list development work outside of the company (including Government proposal or contract).

N/A.

4. INVENTOR:

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Citizenship: USA

Supervisor: Steve Arnold

Signature: Hoyt A. Fleming III

If more than one inventor, attach additional copies of this page, one for each inventor.

5. WITNESS (required for a single inventor)

If there is only one inventor, a witness should sign and date this disclosure. A witness in this case is a non-inventor who understands the nature of the invention.

Nancy Johnson
(Signature of Witness)

(Date)

Nancy Johnson
(Printed Name of Witness)

Note: If you have any questions or wish assistance completing this form, please call the Legal/Patent Department, (208) 893-4790 or 4792.